

## **Dynamic Community Workshops 1.5 hour breakout session**

*Katherine Smith and John Michaelis, Australia, USA, International AVP  
From a breakout at the AVP USA Gathering, San Francisco, May 2011.*

Sharing strategies and agenda adjustments that help to make community workshops dynamic. A brainstorm list:

- Keep a focus on the 5 pillars of AVP (affirmation, communication, community building, problem solving, transforming power)
- Build a diverse team
- Recruit diverse participants
- Remember to post and regularly add to an unanswered questions sheet
- Post and regularly reflect on community agreements
- Insure physical comfort with breaks and addressing any needs that arise
- Do light and livelies early on and regularly
- Invite conflict
- Try going deeper early with a story telling session
- Have facilitation team stories model vulnerability
- Insure early interaction and ice breakers into the agenda, like name game
- Early on offer handouts and have manuals to sell at end of workshop with reminders that they will be there, so notes need not be taken.
- Place a side panel sheet labeled “toolbox” and add to it as the workshop progresses so that tools being used and built are apparent
- Have one or two team members keep a check on how the workshop is addressing all communication and learning styles (such as physical, reading, hearing, repetition, etc.)
- Notice if there are hidden group or individual agendas and strategize ways to help participants put them aside
- Try some different debriefing questions, taken from trauma healing workshops:
  - “What happened for you?”
  - “What was hard for you?”
  - “What difference will this make for you?”
  - “What do you need to be able to move on?”

We broke into small groups twice, first time exploring times workshops were dynamic and weren't in prison and community settings. Each small group was balanced with folks who'd facilitated many and those who were apprenticing. The second small group activity brainstormed 4 aspects of dynamic workshops.

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